

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 ACDA-07 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-13 TRSE-00  
/086 W

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R 041051Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0330

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM POUCH

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO POUCH

AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH

AMEMBASSY MBABANE POUCH

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FROM AMBASSADOR NORLAND

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, BC

SUBJ: VISIT TO FRANCISTOWN/SELEBI-PIKWE REFUGEE CAMPS

REF: (A) GABORONE 1698, (B) GABORONE 1665

1. SUMMARY: AS NOTED REF A, EMBOFFS AND I VISITED FRANCIS-  
TOWN AND SELEBI-PIKWE REFUGEE CAMPS JULY 27 ACCOMPANIED BY  
GOB OFFICIAL TEBAPE AND UNHCR REP PERKINS. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS  
ON NUMBERS, FLOW, CONDITIONS AND ATTITUDES OF REFUGEES. NUMBERS  
OF REFUGEES NOW ACCOMMODATED IN BOTH CAMPS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY  
BELOW MAY-JUNE PERIOD. NEITHER GOB OFFICIALS NOR REFUGEE  
LEADERS ATTRIBUTED REDUCED NUMBERS TO LULL IN POPULAR FRONT  
RECRUITING WITHIN RHODESIA; BOTH DENY RECRUITING IS  
A FACTOR IN REFUGEE FLOW. TRANSPORT OF REFUGEES TO CAMPS IN  
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ZAMBIA CONTINUES, ALTHOUGH BOTH GOB OFFICIALS AND REFUGEE  
REPRESENTATIVES COMPLAINED THAT FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN SPORADIC  
IN RECENT WEEKS. LIVING CONDITIONS IN BOTH CAMPS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY  
IMPROVED DUE TO REDUCED NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHICH MUST BE  
ACCOMMODATED, AND STEPPED-UP UNHCR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE REQUIRED  
SHELTER, FOOD, SANITATION EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER ESSENTIALS.  
REFUGEES WILLING TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS, APPEARED DEEPLY

COMMITTED TO ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST SMITH REGIME AND VIRTUALLY  
IGNORANT OF CURRENT US/UK INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY

2. NUMBERS: FRANCISTOWN CAMP. NUMBER OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES  
HOUSED IN FRANCISTOWN WAS 384 ON JULY 27, A SIGNIFICANT  
DECLINE OVER THE JULY 14TH FIGURE (575) REPORTED BY GOB OFFICIAL  
TEBAPE (PARA 2, REF B). ACCORDING TO GOB DISTRICT OFFICIALS  
AT FRANCISTOWN AND REFUGEE SPOKESMEN IN CAMP, PRIMARY REASON  
FOR THIS DECLINE IS TRANSFER COMPLETD JULY 26 OF APPROXIMATELY  
250 MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE SUPPORTERS TO BETTER EQUIPPED SELEBI-  
PIKWE CAMP. SPOKESMAN FOR NKOMO SUPPORTERS TOLD EMBOFF THAT  
TRANSFERS OF ZAPU SUPPORTERS ARE ALSO MADE TO CAMP IN SELEBI-  
PIKWE FROM WHICH FLIGHTS DEPART FOR NKOMO CAMPS IN ZAMBIA.  
MUGABE SUPPORTERS ARE REPORTEDLY FLOWN DIRECTLY TO ZAMBIA FROM  
FRANCISTOWN, ALTHOUGH SUCH FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN INFREQUENT IN  
RECENT WEEKS. ACCORDING TO GOB OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR CAMP,  
152 FRANNISTOWN REFUGEES LISTED THEMSELVES AS MUGABE SUPPORTERS  
JULY 27; 232 ANNOUNCED PREFERENCE FOR NKOMO. WHILE MANY OF  
FRANCISTOWN REFUGEES WERE RECRUITS OF MILITARY AGE, CAMP ALSO  
CONTAINED SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF WOMEN, YOUNG CHILDREN AND ELDERLY  
WHO WERE CLEARLY REFUGEES FROM SITUATION IN RHODESIA. SEVERAL  
RECENT ARRIVALS FROM RHODESIA SPOKE OF INCREASED ACTIVISM BY  
RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES WHICH SOMETIMES UPROOTED ENTIRE  
FAMILIES AND CAUSED THEM TO FLEE TO BOTSWANA.

3. GOB OFFICIALS AND REFUGEE SPOKESMEN, INCLUDING ZAPU  
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LEADER IN FRANCISTOWN AREA ALBERT NDLOVO, DID NOT AGREE WITH  
RECENT REPORTS THAT FLOW OF REFUGEES DEPARTING RHODESIA HAS  
DIMINISHED IN RECENT WEEKS. HOWEVER, DISTRICT OFFICIAL IN CHARGE  
OF REFUGEE STATISTICS TOLD US THEY NOW ARRIVE IN FRANCISTOWN  
AT THE RATE OF 20/DAY, A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OVER REPORTED  
RATES DURING MAY AND JUNE. NDLOVO TOLD EMBOFF THAT NO INSTRUCTION  
TO STAY HOME HAS BEEN COMMUNICATED TO NKOMO SUPPORTERS IN  
ZIMBABWE AND THAT INCREASED RHODESIAN REPRESSION, RATHER THAN  
ZAPU RECRUITMENT, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESENCE OF REFUGEES IN  
BOTSWANA.

4. CONDITIONS: CONDITIONS OF FRANCISTOWN REFUGEES HAVE IMPROVED  
SIGNIFIANTLY IN RECENT WEEKS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE OPENING  
OF THE RELATIVELY WELL-EQUIPPED SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP TO WHICH  
MANY FRANCISTOWN REFUGEES WERE TRANSFERRED. UNHCR HAS SUPPLIED  
SUFFICIENT BLANKETS, BASIC FOOD ITEMS, AND SHELTER FOR CURENT  
FRANCISTOWN CAMP POPULATION. DESPITE UNHCR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE  
SANITATION EQUIPMENT, SHOWER AND TOILET FACILITIES WERE STILL  
NOT ADEQUATELY MAINTAINED. REFUGEES ARE CRITICALLY SHORT  
OF TOOLS, READING MATERIALS, WORK AND RECREATIONAL ITEMS. MOST  
CRITICAL SHORTAGE, HOWEVER, IS ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP  
ABILITY. DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE HAS NOT BEEN AUGMENTED

WITH PERSONNEL TO HANDLE REFUGEE AFFAIRS; CAMP DIRECTOR'S JOB HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO INEXPERIENCED SUMMER TRAINEE. UNHCR REP PERKINS TOLD US THAT HE INTENDS TO BRING IN (AND IS ACTIVELY RECRUITING) OUTSIDE ADMINISTRATOR FROM LUTHERAN WORLD COUNCIL TO TAKE OVER DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF BOTH FRANCISTOWN AND SELEBI-PIKWE CAMPS. EXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO RESOLUTION OF REMAINING PROBLEMS AT CAMP, BUT MAINTENANCE OF ADEQUATE LIVING CONDITIONS DEPENDS MOST OF ALL UPON HOLDING DOWN NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO BE ACCOMMODATED. SHOULD TRANSFER OF REFUGEES TO ZAMBIA AND/OR SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP BE SUSPENDED OR EVENTS IN RHODESIA BRING ABOUT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ARRIVALS OF REFUGEES, CONDITIONS AT FRANCISTOWN WOULD QUICKLY DETERIORATE.

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R 041051Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0331  
INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
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5. SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP. TOTAL OF 919 RHODESIAN REFUGEES, INCLUDING NEWLY ARRIVED MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE SUPPORTERS FROM FRANCISTOWN, WERE AT SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP JULY 27. ACCORDING TO DISTRICT LABOR OFFICER/RED CROSS DIRECTOR MAKOWE, CHAIRMAN OF SELEBI-PIKWE REFUGEE COMMITTEE, POPULATION OF CAMP HAS BEEN KEPT DOWN BY THREE CHARTER FLIGHTS EACH WEEK WHICH PRESENTLY TRANSPORT APPROXIMATELY 180 REFUGEES TO ZAMBIA. ALTHOUGH NUMBER OF FLIGHTS IS GREATLY REDUCED FROM AVERAGE OF 10-14/WEEK DURING MAY-JUNE, MAKOWE TOLD US THAT HE EXPECTS REGULAR FLIGHT SCHEDULE TO RESUME WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. ACCORDING TO MAKOWE, POPULATION

OF SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP PEAKED AT APPROXIMATELY 1500 DURING MAY-JUNE, DIMINISHED TO APPROXIMATELY 800 IN EARLY JULY, AND HAS BEGUN TO INCREASE AGAIN IN RECENT WEEKS. DESPITE ARRIVAL OF MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE SUPPORTERS FROM FRANCISTOWN, SELEBI-PIKWE REFUGEES ARE PRIMARILY POPULAR FRONT ADHERENTS. NO BREAKDOWN OF NKOMO AND MUGABE SUPPORTERS IN SELEBI-PIKWE WAS AVAILABLE. UNLIKE FRANCISTOWN CAMP, SELEBI-PIKWE APPEARED TO CONTAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEW REFUGEES NOT CLEARLY RECRUITS FOR MILITARY TRAINING. THIS IMPRESSION MAY HAVE BEEN CREATED BECAUSE WOMEN REFUGEES ARE STILL HOUSED IN ADJACENT SELEBI-PIKWE PRISON RATHER THAN WITHIN CAMP ITSELF, AND WERE NOT SEEN.

6. LIVING CONDITIONS AT SELEBI-PIKWE CAMP APPEARED TO BE FULLY ADEQUATE FOR THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES NOW BEING ACCOMMODATED. LOCAL CONTRACTOR ENGAGED BY UNHCR BUILT 60 STRUCTURES (APPROXIMATELY 50 DORMITORIES, 4 SANITARY BLOCKS, KITCHEN, CLINIC AND SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING) IN THIRTEEN WEEKS. BUILDINGS PROVIDE WELL LAID OUT, STRUCTURALLY SOUND, AND REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE ACCOMMODATION FOR UP TO 2000 REFUGEES IF DOUBLE BUNKING IS EMPLOYED. THERE WERE SOME COMPLAINTS OF SHORTAGES OF BLANKETS; HOWEVER, FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS APPEARED ADEQUATE AND BETTER THAN AT FRANCISTOWN. SELEBI-PIKWE IS ALSO CRITICALLY SHORT OF TOOLS, READING MATERIAL, AND OTHER WORK AND RECREATIONAL MATERIALS, ALTHOUGH GOB OFFICIALS PLAN TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR REFUGEES TO BEGIN VEGETABLE GARDENS BETWEEN DORMITORY BUILDINGS. SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS IN SELEBI-PIKWE APPEARED TO BE MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN REFUGEE AFFAIRS THAN WAS THE CASE AT FRANCISTOWN. ALTHOUGH CAMP ORGANIZATION AND MAINTENANCE WAS CONSEQUENTLY OF HIGHER LEVEL, UNHCR REP STILL INTENDS TO BRING IN LUTHERAN WORLD COUNCIL CAMP ADMINISTRATOR.

7. REFUGEE ATTITUDES: EMBOFFS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE RANK AND FILE REFUGEES, AS WELL AS THEIR SPOKESMEN, IN CONVERSATION. WHILE MANY WERE WITHDRAWN AND SULLEN, SEVERAL RESPONDED TO BASIC QUESTIONS CONCERNING LENGTH OF THEIR STAY IN CAMP, HOPES FOR ONWARD TRANSPORTATION, ETC. MOST APPEARED TO BE POORLY INFORMED BY THEIR LEADERS, UNSURE OF FUTURE, AND RETICENT ABOUT THEIR MOTIVES FOR LEAVING RHODESIA. ONE TALKATIVE REFUGEE IN SELBI-PIKWE CAMP TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAD ALREADY

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BEEN TO ZAMBIA FOR GUERRILLA TRAINING, INFILTRATED INTO RHODESIA CARRYING SOVIET-MADE LIGHT AUTOMATIC WEAPON, AND CARRIED OUT

AN OPERATION AGAINST RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES. ACCORDING TO THIS REFUGEE, HE AND HIS COMRADES THEN LEFT THEIR WEAPONS TO OTHER FIGHTERS INSIDE RHODESIA AND JOINED REFUGEES HEADING FOR BOTSWANA. HE EXPRESSED EAGERNESS TO GET ON AN EARLY FLIGHT TO ZAMBIA SO THAT HE COULD GET BACK INTO THE FIGHT. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE FUTURE, HE REPLIED THAT ZIMBABWEANS HAD HOPES FOR THE US/UK INITIATIVE (ABOUT WHICH HE WAS INFORMED) BUT THAT SMITH WOULD PROBABLY FIND A WAY TO "WRIGGLE OFF THE HOOK" AS HE HAS DONE SO OFTEN IN THE PAST. ACCORDING TO REFUGEE, THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR ZIMBABWE WOULD THEN GROW "OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUN".

8. ARMED STRUGGLE WAS ALSO EMPHASIZED BY ZAPU REP IN FRANCIS-TOWN, ALBERT NDLOVO, WHO TOLD US THAT POPULAR FRONT WOULD SEIZE EVERY MEANS AND OPPORTUNITY, POSSIBLY INCLUDING COMING ELECTIONS, TO CARRY OUT GUERRILLA ATTACKS AGAINST SMITH REGIME. HE SAID ZAPU WAS ABOUT TO LAUNCH A "MAJOR OFFENSIVE". WHEN I ASKED WHETHER PASSIVE RESISTANCE MIGHT BE AMONG THE MEANS (RECALLING AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG'S COMMENTS AT MAPUTO), NDLOVO REACTED WITH AIR OF SURPRISE THAT IT SHOULD BE SUGGESTED, AND THEN SAID SUCH TACTICS HAD NOT BEEN CONSIDERED. ARMED ATTACKS OF ALL KINDS WERE WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND. NDLOVO AFFIRMED THAT RHODESIAN REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA WERE NOT RECRUITED BUT WERE FORCED TO FLEE ZIMBABWE BY INCREASED RHODESIAN ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. NDLOVO WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF WESTERN FAILURE TO "FORCE" SMITH TO SETTLE WITH POPULAR FRONT; BUT HE, AS WELL AS ALMOST ALL OTHER REFUGEES WITH WHOM WE TALKED, DISPLAYED ALMOST TOTAL IGNORANCE OF OBJECTIVES AND DETAILS OF CURRENT US/UK INITIATIVE.

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R 041051Z AUG 77  
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AMEMBASSY MAPUTO POUCH

AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH  
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9. COMMENT: FLOW OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES INTO BOTSWANA APPEARS TO BE AFFECTED BY COMPLEX MIXTURE OF FACTORS, INCLUDING LEVEL OF REPRESSIVE ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES BY RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES, PROSPECTIVE REFUGEES' EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING THE RECEPTION THEY WILL RECEIVE IN BOTSWANA, LEVEL OF RECRUITMENT BY NATIONALIST GROUPS, AND RANDOM FACTORS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO POLITICAL SITUATION (SUCH AS WINTER WEATHER). SINCE OTHER VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH REFUGEE FLOW APPEAR TO HAVE REMAINED RELATIVELY CONSTANT, IT SEEMS PLAUSIBLE THAT FEWER REFUGEES HAVE ENTERED BOTSWANA IN RECENT WEEKS BECAUSE INTENSITY OR EFFECTIVENESS OF RECRUITMENT BY NATIONALIST GROUPS MAY HAVE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, DIMINISHED. RECRUITING MAY HAVE SLOWED BECAUSE OF RUMORED RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES CRACKDOWN ON PATRIOTIC FRONT STRUCTURE INSIDE RHODESIA, SATURATION OF ZAMBIAN TRAINING CAMPS, OR BROADER POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITHIN PATRIOTIC FRONT. HOWEVER, ANY BREATHING SPACE THIS LULL MIGHT PROVIDE FOR SMITH REGIME OR FOR BOTSWANA'S REFUGEE FACILITIES IS  
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LIKELY TO BE OF RELATIVELY SHORT DURATION.  
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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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